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OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1061 2070846
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 260846Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4880
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1030
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9802
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4260
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1722
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3450
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0447
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6899
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4515
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0840
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0843
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0540
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2786
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0428
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001061

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/25/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: JOHNNY COMES MARCHING "HOME" TO BURMA

REF: A. RANGOON 1013

[1](#)B. RANGOON 799

Classified By: Poloff Dean Tidwell for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The GOB confirmed rumors that Johnny Htoo, former child soldier and co-leader of Karen rebel faction "God's Army," surrendered to the SPDC with eight others on July 19. Along with his twin brother Luther, he briefly led local Karen compatriots to resist the Burmese Army in the late 1990s when they were children. The GOB regularly showcases small bands of armed fighters whom it has enticed to "return to the legal fold." END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Following rumors for the past week that one or both of the twin Karen brothers of "God's Army" fame had surrendered, the regime's daily "New Light of Myanmar" reported on July 26 that Johnny Htoo left a refugee camp in Thailand and surrendered to Burmese authorities on July 19. Eight others allegedly accompanied him and handed over a few assorted arms. Karen sources reported that twin brother Luther initially planned to surrender, too, but later decided to remain in the refugee camp with his mother, wife, and child.

[1](#)3. (U) The twins, who are around 20 years old now, were co-leaders of a short-lived Karen resistance group in the late 1990s known as "God's Army." Their followers believed the twins' success in resisting the Burmese Army was due to magical powers. "God's Army" gained world attention through its child soldier leaders and by association with another radical Karen group that seized the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok in 1999 and a Thai government hospital a year later. The twins lived in a Thai refugee camp since surrendering to Thai authorities in 2001.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: This latest surrender announcement is yet another chapter in an ongoing regime ritual of putting small groups of resistance fighters who have decided to surrender

on public display (ref A). We believe the regime is trying actively to entice disaffected rebels to "return to the legal fold" by offers of assistance (ref B). The SPDC wants to give remaining insurgents the impression they are out of sync and hopes the trickle of returnees will become a flood. If not, the regime seems content to drain the insurgent pool one bucketful at a time. END COMMENT.
VILLAROSA